SUPPLEMENT TO THE

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SOCIALIZATION OF THE MEDICAL PROFESSION IN NEW ZEALAND

[FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT IN WELLINGTON]

The Social Security Act of 1938 made provision for taxation of 1s. in the £ on all wages and salaries for the purposes of "social security." This tax covered the cost of free treatment in public hospitals, maternity services, old age, invalidity, and unemployment pensions, free medicine from pharmacists, but not until now medical service in the homes of the people or at doctors' consulting rooms. [A full account of the working of the hospital and maternity services under the Act was published in the *Supplement* of March 23, 1940.]

Recently the Social Security Amendment Bill of 1941 was introduced, when the war situation was critical and when between one-quarter and one-third of the medical profession were serving in the Army over-seas or in camps in New Zealand. This amending Bill of 1941 contained briefly the following provisions: For the purposes of the Act the expression "general medical services" meant all proper and necessary services of medical practitioners for persons entitled to any of the benefits provided, except "medical services involving the application of special skill and experience of a degree or kind that general medical practitioners as a class could not reasonably be expected to possess."

The services excluded were the administration of anaesthetics, maternity services, and such other services as might be excluded by the Minister of Health by regulations. The fees were to be 5s. (equal to 4s. sterling) for a consultation at the surgery and 6s. 6d. for a visit, these payments to be made directly out of the Social Security Fund under Government control. Payment for mileage was to be at the rate of 1s. 3d. for every mile up to twenty miles; for distances of more than twenty miles the doctor might recover mileage fees from the patient. The medical officer of health was to decide in all cases if the attendance was necessary, and he was given power to disallow the claim wholly or partly. All claims for medical fees had to be sent to the M.O.H., and had to be accompanied by a certificate from the patient or some responsible person that the service had been performed. The amount paid out of the Social Security Fund as specified above had to be accepted by the doctor in full satisfaction of all claims. Under the Bill the Minister of Health was to decide which practitioners were to be classed as "specialists." Finally, except with the consent of the Minister no doctor could sue for fees. If the patient did not give the necessary certificate the Minister, if he thought fit, might authorize the doctor to sue for fees, but only at the rate of 5s., 6s. 6d., and for mileage. If any person, including the doctor, made a misleading statement he was liable to a fine of £100 or to imprisonment for twelve months.

Before this Bill was tabled a voluntary capitation scheme was introduced offering a capitation fee of 15s., but very few doctors accepted it; one of the few is reported to have put 6,000 patients on his list.

Successful Opposition

It is obvious that this Bill sought to abolish private practice and put the whole profession, except "specialists" in the meantime, under the control of the Minister of Health and his officers. The doctors would be on duty for twenty-four hours a day without holidays, and the most capable and experienced would receive the same payment as juniors and with never a hope of bettering their position. The B.M.A. protested against this coercive Bill, and public indignation meetings were held. The politicians throughout the controversy affected to believe that their scheme was akin to the British panel system. The New Zealand Branch of the B.M.A. put forward a scheme much more liberal than the British one, with a high wage limit, and covering specialist services and preventive medicine.

Confronted by determined opposition the New Zealand Government changed front and brought forward new amendments which got rid of the most objectionable provisions of the Bill, but not quite all. These new amendments were passed by Parliament and are now law. They give doctors freedom to practise in the old way, but the fees are 7s. 6d. for a consultation at the surgery, 7s. 6d. for a visit, and 12s. 6d. for a visit at night or on Sundays. The doctor charges the patient on the basis of these fees, and the patient gets a receipt and recovers the amount paid from the Social Security Department or from a post office. There is nothing to prevent the doctor from charging more than these fees from patients who are able and willing to pay.

The two remaining objections to the modified Act are: (1) The fixing of doctors' fees by Parliament; to fix fees by Act of Parliament is unprecedented, and contrary to all trade union principles. The doctors have asked for a tribunal, which has not been granted. (2) One section of the community—namely, the medical profession—is debarred from access to the courts in respect of claims against patients for payments higher than those mentioned in the Act. This is also unprecedented and probably unconstitutional; at any rate, it will be generally conceded that it outrages the principles of British justice and strikes a blow at freedom.

The profession will probably not oppose the scheme and will find no fault with patients under allegedly "free" medical service obtaining a refund of 7s. 6d. a consultation from the Social Security Fund created from a 1s. in the £ tax. Under the amended law doctors of the Dominion will have no direct contact with the State, but they bitterly resent their fees being fixed by Parliament. Most of all they resent being denied access to the courts, especially when patients may still bring actions against doctors for alleged negligence. Therefore the medical profession cannot cordially co-operate.

Commenting on the Protection of Practices Scheme in Scotland the Executive Committee of the Scottish Association of Insurance Committees, in its report for 1940-1, states that the information at its disposal indicates that the scheme has been successful and its wide adoption has been beneficial to both committees and the medical profession. The Executive, however, has been unable to agree to the term "absentee practitioner" being applied to doctors who are incapacitated or have died in the ordinary course of Nature. It considers that death or permanent incapacity in the case of a doctor in whole-time emergency service is adequately covered by the present arrangements. A proposal to extend the period of temporary residence of insured persons from three to six months has been agreed to by the Executive and is being considered by the Department of Health. The Executive, with other interested bodies, has made repeated representations during the year to the Department of Health on the subject of the hospital waiting lists, and a scheme is now in operation which, according to some reports, is partially relieving the situation. Briefly the scheme aims at utilizing to a limited extent the E.M.S. hospitals. Doctors will send all cases to voluntary hospitals in the usual way; the subsequent transfer of cases (with the patient's consent) and admission to an E.M.S. hospital will be for the decision of the two hospitals concerned. Doctors will also refer acute surgical cases to voluntary hospitals in the first instance, but the medical superintendent may, at his discretion, divert them to an E.M.S. hospital. The Executive comments that the arrangements are involved and cumbersome, but it is too early yet to say whether they will be effective in reducing the waiting lists.

MEDICAL WAR RELIEF FUND

TWENTY-FIFTH LIST

Previously acknowledged, £34,437 9*s.* 7*d. and* £100 3½% *Conversion Stock and* £40 3% *Defence Bonds*

Individual Subscriptions

£15 15s.—Drs. Moran, Cooper, and McCloy, East Looe.

£10 10s.—Lieut.-Colonel C. W. Gordon Bryan, R.A.M.C.

£5 5s.—Anonymous; Dr. R. H. P. Clark, Upper Burma; Dr. Dorothy M. Howse, Dorchester; Dr. H. A. F. Wilson, Ringwood.

£3 3s.—Surgeon Rear-Admiral R. J. McKeown, R.N. (ret.), Portsmouth.

£3.—Lieut.-Colonel E. E. Holden, R.A.M.C., Burma.

£2 2s.—Dr. W. Russell Scott, Weymouth.

£2.—Dr. H. F. Blood, Belper (2nd donation).

£1 1s.—Dr. T. Benson Evans, Prestatyn (8th donation); Dr. L. B. Shelton, Surbiton; Major S. R. F. Whittaker, R.A.M.C.

£1.—Dr. B. W. Alexander, Gillingham, Dorset.

£265 0s. 7d.—North Pacific Society of Internal Medicine, Seattle, U.S.A.

£56 1s. 6d.—Luton and Dunstable Medical Society—per Dr. F. E. Seymour Lloyd.

£22 7s.—Ross and Cromarty Division—per Dr. J. R. Anderson: Dr. D. E. Pyle £3 3s.; Dr. C. Mackenzie £2 2s.; Dr. J. A. Murray £2 2s.; Dr. J. G. Hunter £2 2s.; Dr. J. L. Horne £2; Dr. J. Cameron £2; Dr. R. J. Lumsden £1 1s.; Dr. D. Wallace £1 1s.; Dr. D. J. Macrae £1 1s.; Dr. H. Ross £1 1s.; Dr. W. C. Fraser £1 1s.; Dr. N. L. Auchterlonie £1 1s.; Dr. R. Maclean £1 1s.; Dr. J. R. Anderson £1 1s.; Major J. H. Horne 10s.

£22 1s.—Practitioners in area of Consett Division—per Dr. K. M. Macdonald: Dr. J. Charles £3 3s.; Dr. R. Parry £3 3s.; Dr. D. A. Dewar £3 3s.; Dr. F. M. Fyfe £1 1s.; Dr. J. Hepburn £1 1s.; Dr. C. Fenwick £1 1s.; Dr. C. J. B. Fox £1 1s.; Dr. M. D. Mackenzie £1 1s.; Dr. G. Ewen £1 1s.; Dr. J. Murray £1 1s.; Dr. K. M. Macdonald £1 1s.; Dr. S. J. B. Fox £1 1s.; Mr. G. F. Duggan £1 1s.; Dr. E. McKinney £1 1s.; Dr. T. Lyon £1 1s.

£11 6s.—Per Dr. A. D. Frazer and Mr. N. P. R. Galloway, Nottingnam (amount already sent £291).

£10 10s.—Practitioners in Crewe and District—per Dr. M. Parkes (amount already sent £133 7s. 8d.); Dr. J. M. D. Brydson. Per Dr. Mabel Ramsay, Plymouth (amount already sent £302 7s. 6d.); Mr. H. F. Vellacott (3rd donation).

£8 1s.—Practitioners in Lothians Division—per Dr. R. H. Thomson (amount already sent £6): Dr. C. Cameron £5; Dr. H. W. Howieson £1 1s.; Dr. R. H. Thomson £2 (2nd donation).

£5 5s.—Practitioners in the Macclesfield and East Cheshire Division—per Dr. F. E. Lomas (amount already sent £48).

£4 2s.—Practitioners in area of East Suffolk Division—per Dr. H. Henry (amount already sent £519): Lieut.-Colonel H. E. Staddon £2 2s.; Dr. S. W. Hoyland £2.

£3 3s.—Collected at meeting of Colchester Medical Society (amount already sent £33 9s.): Dr. M. J. Brookes £2 2s.; Dr. B. Upton-Jones £1 1s.

£2 8s.—Blyth Division Unaccompanied Children's Evacuation Fund—per Dr. Wilbur C. Lowry.

£2 2s.—Practitioners in area of East Norfolk Division—per Dr. J. A. Eddy (amount already sent £84 9s.): Dr. V. J. Duigan.

£1 1s.—Practitioners in the North Middlesex Division area—per Dr. J. R. Richmond Ritchie (amount already sent £178 12s.): Dr. L. J. de Gebert.

Total, £34,926 3*s.* 8*d. and* £100 3% *Conversion Stock and* £40 3% *Defence Bonds*

Malaya Branch.—The following were the contributors to the donation of £321 3s. 6d. acknowledged in the *Supplements* of August 23 and September 20: Dr. W. L. Blakemore $10; Sir David Galloway $1,000; Dr. M. Hikosake $20; Dr. A. Viswalingam $25; Prof. J. K. Monro $100; Dr. C. D. Williams $200; Colonel W. H. Cornelius, R.A.M.C., $10; Dr. H. O. Hopkins $25; Dr. Loh Seng Tak $20; Dr. Hu Tsai Kuen $25; Dr. R. A. Pallister $50; Dr. J. Coutts Milne $10; Dr. Mona H. Whyte $20.25; Dr. D. R. McPherson $25; Dr. J. M. Hands $25; Dr. W. J. Dixon $25.29; Dr. Ethel Morris $50; Dr. S. C. Howard $200; Dr. E. S. Lawrie $100; Dr. E. Goldberg $25; Dr. V. T. Patwardhan $5; Dr. J. M. A. Lowson $50; Dr. R. M. B. Lowis $50; Dr. Margaret Gibson-Hill $50; Dr. J. E. McMahon $20.25; Dr. O. E. Fisher $20; Dr. Ho Sui Khan $25; Dr. A. S. McKern $100; Dr. Tong Lai Yee $15; Dr. L. Sammy $10; Dr. W. S. Leicester $10; Dr. Kwong Kim Cheong $10; Dr. A. E. Bedell $25; Dr. Lim Yew Poh $10; Dr. I. MacKintosh $25.29; Dr. E. D. Wolfe $20.25; Dr. J. V. Landor $25; Prof. E. K. Tratman $10; Dr. J. M. Dugdale $50; Dr. Chee Set Chew $50; Dr. J. F. Mitchell $25; Dr. C. Nadarajah $5; Dr. P. E. F. Routley $5; Dr. M. A. Gabriel $10; Dr. H. R. Dive $25; Mr. S. J. Campbell $26; Dr. E. M. Rex $50.31; the Hon. R. B MacGregor $25; Dr. B. Cross $20.

Correction.—The amount credited to Dr. Russell Brain in the twenty-fourth list under "Practitioners in the area of the Marylebone Division" was incorrectly stated as £2 2s. The amount should have been stated as £5 5s.

Medical Forces of H.M. Services Appointments

ROYAL NAVY

Surgeon Captain E. C. Holton, O.B.E., has been placed on the retired list.

ROYAL NAVAL VOLUNTEER RESERVE

Surgeon Lieut. T. D. G. Wilson to be Surgeon Lieutenant-Commander.

Probationary Temporary Surgeon Lieuts. W. W. Hutton, R. St. C. Mooney, E. Kavanagh, A. W. Hagger, J. G. Reynolds, A. J. Innes, A. M. Desmond, G. C. Blackham, G. S. C. Sowry, H. H. Kirk, and A. P. Bates to be Temporary Surgeon Lieutenants.

ARMY

Colonel K. Comyn, late R.A.M.C., has retired on retired pay and remains employed.

Lieut.-Colonel (Acting Brigadier) W. G. Hartgill, O.B.E., M.C., from R.A.M.C., to be Colonel.

Major A. C. H. Gray, O.B.E., late R.A.M.C., has reverted to retired pay and resumes the rank of Colonel on ceasing to be re-employed.

ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL CORPS

Major (Temporary Lieut.-Colonel) T. Menzies to be Lieutenant-Colonel.

Lieut. J. P. Crawford to be Captain.

REGULAR ARMY RESERVE OF OFFICERS

ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL CORPS

Captain K. L. O'Sullivan to be Brevet Major, under the provisions of Article 168, Royal Warrant for Pay and Promotion, 1940.

WEEKLY POSTGRADUATE DIARY

BRITISH POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL SCHOOL, Ducane Road, W.—*Daily,* 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Medical Clinics, Surgical Clinics and Operations, Obstetric and Gynaecological Clinics and Operations. *Daily,* 1.30 p.m., Post-mortem Demonstrations. *Mon.,* 2.30 p.m., Course on Operative Surgery in Wartime commences. *Tues.,* 10 a.m., Paediatric Clinic, Dr. R. Lightwood; 11 a.m., Gynaecological Clinic, Mr. V. B. Green-Armytage. *Wed.,* 11.30 a.m., Clinico-pathological Conference (Medical); 2 p.m., Lecture, Diagnosis of Typhoidal Disease, Dr. M. Barber. *Thurs.,* 2 p.m., Dermatological Clinic, Dr. R. T. Brain. *Fri.,* 12.15 p.m., Clinico-pathological Conference (Surgical); 2 p.m., Clinico-pathological Conference (Gynaecological); 3 p.m., Sterility Clinic, Mr. Green-Armytage.

FELLOWSHIP OF MEDICINE AND POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, 1, Wimpole Street, W.—*Brompton Hospital,* S.W.: Tues. and Thurs., 3 p.m., M.R.C.P. Course in Chest Diseases. *London Chest Hospital,* Victoria Park, E.: Thurs., 2 p.m., M.R.C.P. Course in Chest Diseases. *King Edward Memorial Hospital,* Ealing, W.: Sat., Nov. 29, 2 p.m., M.R.C.P. Course in General Medicine. *West End Hospital for Nervous Diseases:* Tues. and Fri., 3 p.m., M.R.C.P. Course in Neurology.

DIARY OF SOCIETIES AND LECTURES

ROYAL SOCIETY OF MEDICINE

Section of Odontology.—Mon., 2 p.m. Paper by Surgeon Lieut.-Commander (D) J. Bunyan: Treatment of Mouth Infections, with Particular Reference to the Use of Electrolytic Sodium Hypochlorite.

Section of Urology.—Thurs., 2.30 p.m. Discussion: Rupture of the Urethra and its Treatment. Openers, Mr. Clifford Morson, Mr. Charles Wells, and Mr. Hugh C. Barry.

Section of Disease in Children.—Fri., 2.30 p.m. Discussion: Effects of Wartime Rationing on Child Health. Openers, Dr. E. M. Widdowson, Dr. D. C. Wilson, and Dr. W. W. Payne.

Section of Epidemiology and State Medicine.—Fri., 3 p.m. Paper by Dr. Melville Mackenzie: Some Practical Considerations in the Control of Louse-borne Typhus Fever in Great Britain, in the Light of Experience in Russia, Poland, Rumania, and China. Dr. G. W. M. Findlay, Prof. P. A. Buxton, and others will take part in the subsequent discussion.

BIOCHEMICAL SOCIETY.—At Courtauld Institute of Biochemistry, Middlesex Hospital, W., *Sat.,* 11 a.m. Discussion: The Mode of Action of Chemotherapeutic Agents. To be opened by Dr. G. M. Findlay.

CHADWICK TRUST.—At Westminster Hospital Medical School, 17, Horseferry Road, S.W., *Thurs.,* 2.30 p.m. Dr. S. Ernest Dore: Advances in Dermatology during the Past Forty Years.

MEDICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON, 11, Chandos Street, W.—*Mon.,* 3.30 p.m. Discussion on three short papers: Heart Attacks, by Dr. John Parkinson; Congenital Shortening of the Oesophagus, by Mr. V. E. Negus; and Regional Ileitis, by Mr. Guy Blackburn.

VACANCIES

EXAMINING FACTORY SURGEON.—The appointment at St. Blazey (Cornwall) is vacant. Applications to the Chief Inspector of Factories, 28, Broadway, S.W.1, by December 2.

B.M.A.: Branch and Division Meetings to be Held

STIRLING BRANCH.—At County Offices, Viewforth, Stirling, Sunday, November 23, 2.45 p.m. Dr. Charles Melville: General discussion on the post-war organization of the medical services of the county.

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, AND DEATHS

The charge for inserting announcements under this head is 10s. 6d. This amount should be forwarded with the notice, authenticated with the name and address of the sender, and should reach the Advertisement Manager not later than first post Monday morning to ensure insertion in the current issue.

BIRTHS

PARRY.—On October 25, at Penylan Nursing Home, Cardiff, to Margaret (*née* Edwards), M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., wife of F/O Keith Parry, R.A.F.V.R. (Med.), a daughter.

WEDDELL.—On November 8, at Hagley, Worcs, to Margaret Weddell, M.B., Ch.B., wife of Ralph Weddell, a son.